Dordt student attends Obama’s Inauguration

Bridget Smith
Staff Writer

“No,” I half groaned as the metro door slid open and expectant riders stepped forward. “Why aren’t people moving toward the middle? There’s a ton of room,” one person complained.

“It’s way more crowded than you think – there are short people you can’t see,” I said.

My fellow passengers began to laugh, and I realized my mouth had run away with me. I have never once felt claustrophobic, but being squeezed into a metro car at 4 a.m. with dozens of other people as the train jolted toward our destination was enough to give me a panic attack.

I wondered if I would be able to keep myself from losing my peanut butter sandwich breakfast on the ladies who were crammed up next to me. After a two hour trip – one that normally takes 30 minutes – from our metro stop in Virginia to the metro stop near the National Mall in D.C., we joined the masses to stand in line for the designated silver ticket entrance. After the rush through the first gate, we stood for nearly three hours – moving three steps every half hour. I began to lose feeling in my feet as people around me shoved packets of warmers into their shoes and mittens.

We began to wonder if anyone was moving through the security checkpoints ahead. Even if the line finally began to move, we did not know if we would make it through the gate in time to see Barack Obama take his oath. As the crowd grew restless, a man just a few yards ahead of me began to climb a traffic light. The crowd began to cheer him on as he struggled to pull himself up. When he had finally made it to the top, he waved to the crowd and everyone was silent. The man informed us that we were about 100 yards away from the gate, and he did not see anyone moving through it.

My friends and I decided to leave as fast as we could in order to find the nearest establishment with a TV. Eventually, we decided to go to a classroom where we had spent a semester learning to be journalists. When we finally were able to get on the metro, my friend and I had a change of heart. We could not seclude ourselves from the thousands of people who had come to D.C. to witness this event – the crowd was part of the experience. The two of us separated from our group and reversed directions on the metro.

We initially decided to find a pub with a TV and tons of people. Instead, we stood for nearly three hours – moving three steps every half hour. I continued on page 3.

Symposium receives donation and new club funding
Sarah Gronneck
Guest Writer

With Student Symposium’s first meeting of the semester on January 19th came the surprise of an anonymous donation and the inaudulation of a new club funding program.

Student Symposium advisor Bethany Schuttinga announced that a donor, interested in the newly formed Symposium program, had given $5,000 for the student body.

“The money should go directly to the students,” said Schuttinga. “[Symposium] will have to decide how to go about that.”

Representatives bounced around ideas at the meeting, including the prospect of sponsoring a series of events and speakers on campus.

No final decisions were made concerning the donation. In the meantime, students are highly encouraged to submit their ideas to Symposium.

Also, Kuyper Scholars’ Program representative Robert Minto presented the KSP Proposal for Club at the meeting.

After much discussion, Symposium representatives approved the proposal, which will be a different approach from last semester’s look at funding.

“We will be separating funding between events and clubs,” said Minto. Clubs will fill out revamped club status registration forms but will also be able to fill out continued on page 3.

Naming the numbers
Spring enrollment additions and subtractions
Alyssa Hoogendoorn
Staff Writer

Numbers. Facts. Figures. Dordt College swallows them to stay alive. They are extracted from places around the country and the world, bringing them to northwest Iowa and siphoning money from their bank accounts. More numbers.

An interesting number to look at is the number of students who aren’t at Dordt anymore. Jim Bos, registrar and vice president of academic affairs, reported 1,363 students at fall enrollment and 1,257 students at spring enrollment for this academic year. That’s a difference of 106 students.

“If you look at the past ten years, [the difference] has been as low as 50-60 and as high as 115-120,” Bos said. “We’re probably a little on the high end of the range this year.”

but he went on to say that Dordt experienced a record number of December graduates – about 40.

Three other groups of students need to be taken into account in order to better explain the fluctuations: special students (includes high schools students, people from the community, and students from other institutions who take courses at Dordt), students who transfer in and students who drop or transfer out.

One group in particular is notorious for losing a large number of students in the semester transition – the freshmen.

“I expect...from fall to spring, that we will keep 90 percent of our freshmen,” Bos said. “If you look over the last five years, that’s the number.”

The freshmen class began the academic year with a record number of 401 students, but at the start of the spring semester, that number has dropped to 358 students – a difference of 43, putting retention at 89.3 percent. continued on page 2.
New student government official this semester

Jurgen Boerema  
Staff Writer

Three upperclassmen were tasked at the beginning of last semester with forming a more effective and efficient student government. The process involved drafting a new constitution, forming elections, and gathering ideas from other colleges.

The completed Student Symposium is the result of the work of Alvin Shim, Jessica Veenstra and David Christensen.

Bethany Schuttinga, Associate Provost for Co-Circular Programs, met with Dordt’s student government in the 2007-08 academic year on a weekly basis.

“We had trouble getting minutes from students who were supposed to be serving on various academic committees,” Schuttinga said.

“There was not a clear idea of what people wanted to accomplish.”

When your biggest event is planning the Christmas Dance for the campus—that is a problem.”

Main issues that had to be addressed were engaging students in the life of the college, enhancing communication between faculty and staff, and providing oversight on the funding of student organizations and events.

Dordt students held a public meeting near the end of the previous academic year to nominate several people to devote time and effort to the job of reforming the government.

The new version of Dordt’s government is comprised of a representative from each academic division, as well as each residence hall.

The Kuyper Scholars Program, SAC, Community Developments Assistants, and Praise and Worship Committee are also represented.

Separate representatives for the recording of meeting minutes (Hani Yang), maintaining a website (Paul Hanaoka) and submitting relevant news to the Diamond (Sarah Groneman) also sit on Student Symposium.

Shim, Christensen and Veenstra now form a portion of the government known as “The Council” that introduces issues to Symposium but cannot vote on them.

Another member of the government is the liaison to the Iowa Student Congress (Jurgen Boerema).

This Congress is a group of Iowa college students who meet annually to discuss opportunities for campus initiatives, listen to speakers and lobby officials on issues pertinent to college students.

In early November, several students accompanied Shim, Christensen and Veenstra to Iowa’s state capitol where the Congress was conducting its first official session.

“The trip was useful in the formation of the new student government.”

“The session was a good opportunity to see the problems that other larger schools are having,” said Christensen.

“We could see how they approached the situation and then work from there. I was surprised by how much we have in common with other bigger universities such as Drake and Iowa State University.”

“It was encouraging to see students in a position of leadership at larger universities,” said Shim.

The group from Dordt spent their time listening to presentations from students and state representatives, and a round-table discussion from other students. They also heard representatives speak on environmental, health and safety issues on campuses, and a commission on economic issues in Iowa.

Shim, Christensen and Veenstra also researched student government models at universities such as Wheaton and Calvin College.

Last semester, the council also handled additional issues such as confusion over the distribution of athletic scholarships and allocation of funds to student clubs on campus. They assisted in advertising campus events such as Hunger and AIDS Awareness week.

“Before the last few months of my junior year at Dordt, I had no idea what Student Forum did on campus,” said Veenstra.

“When I heard that there was an opportunity to re-create this entity to better serve students, I got excited about doing something new and different. I was honored to be elected as one of the three people to do the job.”

Schuttinga voiced similar thoughts on the new government.

“I am pleased with those who are currently sitting on Student Symposium and once again find that the table is surrounded by talent and those who can lead,” she said.

“It is my hope that the vision of those who created this group will remain alive as new leaders join this group in the future.”

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Changes in enrollment mean many things

Students withdraw for a variety of personal reasons, ranging from academics to social life. Whatever the reason, something turned out different than expected, as Bob Wiersma, interim director of career services, explained.

“We have some students who come here and say, ‘I want to be in a particular program.’ But then they get here and find out it’s different than what they expected,” said Quentin Van Essen, executive director of admissions.

“The education is something they have to want.”

According to Bos, one major reason why students leave is because they want to be closer to home. He also said there has always been a pattern in which the number of male students who leave at semester is higher than the number of female students this year is no different.

However, one organization in particular lost a large number of students in the transition from the fall to spring semester and that is the football team.

To throw out some more numbers – 89 names were on the varsity football roster this fall, including 54 freshmen. In order to fall in line with the 90 percent retention rate, the football team would have needed to retain 49 of the freshmen. But 18 freshmen, along with four upperclassmen, are not at Dordt this term.

The team has taken yet another hard hit. John Heavner, head football coach, said winning football games is obviously going to help the retention of football players, but people need to realize the football program is young and needs time to grow.

He said that people asking why the football team isn’t winning all their games is like asking his one-year-old daughter why she can’t read.

“We’re a young program – it’s just going to take time,” Heavner said.

He went on to express some frustration about the players who left. He said that many of them did well in football, did well in school and didn’t get in trouble. Why they left is a curious thing to him.

“I certainly wouldn’t have brought in one single person who I thought was going to leave,” Heavner said. “I think anybody that’s in admissions or recruiting will tell you that to the best of your ability you try to find the best possible people you can, but you never really know how somebody is going to like it or not like it.”

A formula seems to exist within this. Subtract family and high school friends. Add 1,000 miles from home. Divide time into hours of homework and office activities. Multiply the stress. Toss in some other random things – equals plus or minus one student at Dordt.

Behind all those numbers and names on a roster are people – former Dordt students with reasons for coming to Dordt and reasons for leaving.

Jack Bryant, of Aledo, Texas, said, “I came to Dordt to play football – equals plus or minus one student at Dordt.”

Bryant had no idea that Dordt was going to Tarrant County Community College and intern for a group of environmental engineers.

Jordan Alexander, of Tulsa, Okla, said, “I came to Dordt to play football, and I left because school wasn’t for me – all I could do was think about home.” He plans to join the U.S. Air Force.

Scotty Walden, of Cleburne, Texas, said, “I came to Dordt to get a great education first and then, of course, for football.”

I decided to leave mainly because I just didn’t feel like I fit in. It’s hard to play without your family there to cheer you on and support you.”

He is now going to Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene, Texas and playing football there.

A number of factors intersected, causing a number of students to leave.

Look past the numbers. See people.
Inauguration crowds add to experience of historic day

continued from page 1

we wound up back on the scene at the National Mall squeezing and weaving through the crowds to try to slip into a spot. No such luck. All openings were blocked. As Aretha Franklin was called on stage, we found ourselves in a unique location. We stood in an open area inside a huge circle of portable potties. A number of others were standing in the circle trying to listen as the ceremonies progressed. People had piled on the roofs of the portable potties and climbed up in the surrounding trees to listen and watch.

I still have not seen the inauguration, but I stood alongside dozens of others as we listened intently with smiles on our faces to the tunes of Aretha Franklin and Yo-Yo Ma. Tears filled my eyes as Obama made his speech, and I realized that I was in Washington D.C. for a historical event I would never forget.

In the aftermath, there are numerous stories in the Washington Post about the investigation into what went wrong on Inauguration Day. According to the Post, “The Capitol Police and other officials underestimated the turnout among ticket holders. They turned down advance offers of help from volunteers and the National Guard, officials say. And police failed to respond adequately when trouble arose.

Satellite photos show more than 10,000 people swarming outside each of three security gates shortly before the inaugural ceremony began at 11:30 a.m., or 34 minutes before Obama took the oath.

More than 1 million people were able to make onto the mall and Capitol grounds. Complaints and angry protests have been submitted to a number of newspapers and public officials.

Frankly, I am happy with my own experience outside the gated masses. I was thrilled to stand and endure the extreme weather then? What about M&Ms? Grapes? Snickers? A napkin?”

Any apparent disappointment, tension, sleepiness and cold toes were worth it. Not only was I able to witness – albeit in hearing – a historical event, I was able to witness the crowd’s response to a historic event. I saw hundreds of volunteers, military personnel and police, work with patience to make sure everyone was safe. In a crowd of millions of people, injuries were minimal and catastrophes were relatively small. No matter where a person stands on the political spectrum, Washington D.C. on Inauguration Day is a phenomenal opportunity.

I do not support all of Barack Obama’s plans and actions for the government.

Nonetheless, his speech that formation acting and working together as a community – with personal responsibility – was reflected in many of the actions of members of the crowd that day.

“In reaffirming the greatness of our nation, we understand that greatness is never a given. It must be earned.”

–President Barack Obama

Surviving winter weather

Ryan Campbell
Staff Writer

Moving here from Texas, where the weather is 80 degrees the day after Christmas, caused me to question how someone could possibly live in an area that frequently drops below zero.

The question is not how could people endure the extreme weather now, but how could someone settle here hundreds of years ago and endure the weather then?

When I asked my Midwestern friends, my question was more laughed at than responded to. So for the educated college students, here’s a brief history lesson that will work in your favor.

By the 1830’s, many American settlers came to Iowa. They were usually from New York, Indiana, Kentucky, and Virginia, but were caught by surprise to find mainly prairies and little timbered areas, a landscape which meant no homes, fences or fuel for fire, and which equals no heat, hypothermia and frost bite – potentially leaving them dead in an Iowa winter.

Settlers were able to find the wood for building cabins in eastern and central Iowa. For fuel they used dried prairie hay, corn cobs and dried animal droppings. In Northwest Iowa, settlers constructed sod houses which were said to be cheap to build, warm in the winter and cool in the summers.

By the 1850’s, settlers began to revolutionize their homes by adding several warming techniques. Each room was built with a fireplace, carpets were two-sided and flipped due to the season - one side was white, allowing summer heat to bounce off and keep the house cool, the other side was black in order to trap heat. Unused rooms were closed off from the rest of the house.

At night, fires were extinguished in fear of a house fire, so each room was dropped the same temperature as the outside with no wind chill.

The settlers were able to keep warm by night using thick quilts, and hot coals were also commonly put in a pan and placed in the bed sheets to keep them warm through the night. While outside, settlers were able to keep warm by stacking clothing such as a heavy coat, woolen trousers, corduroy trousers, and a heavy flannel woolen undershirt with socks and mittens. What we think of as travel was nearly impossible. People used horses and mules and, depending on the terrain, sledges and carriages.

Every college student in Iowa should know how settlers got here and how they survived, so the next time someone asks you how the settlers survived, don’t stand there and laugh – answer the question.

Symposium Update

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additional funding request forms for various projects throughout the semester.

Symposium will review the forms and decide whether or not the request should be granted. The funding request forms are open, according to the preliminary fund form, to “any student or club […] for a specific project that will benefit the whole campus.”

The KSP Proposal was one of four options that Symposium representatives looked at on the 19th for changing the club funding program.

Last semester’s allocation method involved splitting clubs into private or public interest categories.

“[Alvin Shim, David Christiansen, and Jessica Veenstra] took a closer look to see how monies were being allocated,” said chairperson Jessica Veenstra.

Private interest clubs were, according to Veenstra, “more geared toward a major but not as accessible to people across campus,” while public clubs focused more on the public’s interests.

Much of the club funding went to the public interest clubs, bringing about mixed reviews. Guidelines and request forms for this semester’s club funding program are still unannounced. In the meantime, Symposium members will be contacting club presidents about the new proposal.

For more information about the club funding changes or to submit ideas on how the $5,000 donation should be allocated, please contact Student Symposium at symposium@jordi.edu.
Christmas break is a much anticipated respite on a college campus. And this year, 36 Dordt students and employees dedicated part of it to several short-term mission projects through A Mission OutReach (AMOR).

This year, AMOR participants traveled to Belize, the Dominican Republic and Nicaragua. AMOR made its very first trip in the 1980s, when students traveled to the Dominican Republic. Since then, AMOR has expanded and added Belize as its third site last year.

Senior Tina Heilman was one of 12 students who went to the Dominican Republic. “They really didn’t want to make the 10 of us girls work!” she said. “They kept trying to take our shovels at the beginning, but by the end they realized we could do it.”

This year, students worked on a variety of projects. From making gravel paths to building and demolition, there was no shortage of work to be done.

Still, many noticed a difference in the cultural attitude towards work. Senior Grant Dykstra noted that the culture in Belize was much slower-paced, with less emphasis on efficiency. And Ben Witte, a senior who traveled to Nicaragua, agreed. “Relationships mattered more than getting the job done; the job was important, but there wasn’t a big hurry,” he said. “They joke around about being on ‘Nica time,’” said senior Whitney Elgersma. Not only does AMOR give students the opportunity to serve, but participants are also greatly blessed by their experiences.

“The Belizean people opened my eyes to how we should allow our faith to impact our everyday living.”

--Jon De Young

De Kam added that she was amazed by the love their team experienced and was grateful to meet Christians in Nicaragua. “I felt as if there were an immediate connection between us and the Christians there,” she said.

Many of the AMOR participants have become advocates for AMOR, claiming more people should take a chance to experience this opportunity. “It was a humbling experience,” said junior Sierra Zomer. “I’m so glad I went.”

2009 AMOR Participants

The Dominican Republic team included Kiley Schouten, Tina Heilman, Jaclyn Ver Mulm, Katie Van Den Top, Elizabeth Brand, Rachel Gorter, Ryan Johnson, Erin Mouw, Sierra Zomer, Amber DeKoekkoek, Natalie Feenstra and Joseph Buhlig.

The Belize team included Cassie Huizenga, Sara De Bruin, Amanda Vande Voort, Amber Wilson, Kayla Breem, Jonathan De Young, Grant Dykstra, Julie Heida, Mark Eekhoff and Jevin Vyn.

The Nicaraguan team included Joelle Van Gaalen, Whitney Elgersma, Stephanie Krooze, Shawna Van Wyhe, Jennifer Roetman, Beth De Kam, Marne’ De Bruin, Danielle Mellema, Pamela Schutt, Benjamin Witte and Monique Lieuwen.
Men at work: Construction progresses over break

Lance Kooiman
Staff Writer

Now that a significant portion of the framework of the new classroom building is near completion, the stage is set to get the ball rolling on new developments.

Among the new developments is the plan to split C160 in half to create two classrooms and fill in the descending stairs, making it level with the top steps by the doors.

“This is one of the most aggressive construction projects that Dordt has had in years,” said Stan Oordt, Dordt’s director of physical plant. “Students will really see how big an improvement this will be to the building when it is finished.”

What is now shelled off and wrapped in plastic tarp will eventually be the new computer technology room on first floor and the second-floor social studies pod, on second. Cement crews have already poured one of the first-level floors inside of the shell.

“This is one of the most aggressive construction projects that Dordt has had in years.”

— Stan Oordt

Above: A rendering shows what the completed classroom building addition will look like. Right: What is now wrapped up in plastic tarp will be the new technology room and the social studies pod. Photo by Naomi De Boer.

So far, all of the concrete footings have been put in, 60 percent of the sidewalks in the art and education addition are complete, and the electrical work is nearly 50 percent complete.

A lot of interior work is being done as well. Heating and air conditioning ducts are being installed into the theatre/drama rooms and offices, new men’s and women’s restrooms are being rebuilt next to the theatre (where the jackhammers are blaring), and several other classrooms and labs are currently being built inside.

Plans call for the crew to completely remodel the second floor by knocking out old walls and constructing new classrooms.

“Second floor will look like a wide-open gym at that point,” said Oordt.

Construction is expected to be finished by Aug. 15 this year.

“Other than a few changes to the original plans when construction began, there have not been any setbacks or accidents to halt progress,” said Oordt, “Everything is going smoothly.”

Home for the holidays, and just in time

Shena and Nathan Couperus recount their agonizing journey home for Christmas

Adrian Heilema
Staff Writer

Along with the presents, cards, and sometimes annoying relatives comes the Christmas tradition of travel horror stories. Every year, people from around the world gather to listen to some family member whine about a delayed flight, terrible roads, or that one guy who sat next to him and snored loudly. But this year, Dordt students, traveling from Iowa to wherever home is met with more than the usual number of problems.

Both to and from Dordt, this year many students encountered winter weather warnings—not to mention blizzards—that created delayed flights and left many a student stranded in an uncomfortable airport.

But for those who think that their two-hour delay, unruly seat-mate, or overnight stay was bad, consider the story of Shena and Nathan Couperus, two Dordt students and siblings from Abbotsford, British Columbia.

Having finished their exams, the Couperuses were waiting in Omaha for their 8:00 flight out to Denver, where they would hop on a plane to Seattle before reaching home. That’s when the winter weather blasted in.

“There were a bunch of Dordt students there in Omaha as well,” said Shena. “We looked at the departures screen and saw every flight around us get canceled, but ours was still okay.”

Nathan and Sheena boarded the plane, only to be told that their flight had just been canceled as well.

Thankfully, the two of them, and six other Dordt students, were invited to stay at the home of fellow student Kaitlyn Slagter.

They managed to get a flight to Denver on Saturday evening, but even that flight was delayed. During the delay, they called ahead only to discover that their flight from Denver to Seattle had also been canceled.

After arriving in Denver, Sheena and Nathan were greeted with the unwelcome surprise of missing luggage.

“There were heaps and bounds of luggage lying around in the Denver airport,” recalls Shena. “As we were walking past, I saw my suitcase out of the corner of my eye.”

Sure enough, they managed to find their luggage and a place to stay overnight—at the house of Dordt student Amber Weingartner.

The next morning they arrived back at Denver airport, only to find their new flight to Seattle was canceled. So they found a different one... but that one was canceled, too.

“Of course another flight got canceled. That was our fourth cancellation; we had four different boarding passes, and that was about the eighth flight we had tried to get on,” said Shena. “We went to the lady at the desk and she told us there were no more flights to Seattle until after Christmas, so I asked if we could get on a flight to Vancouver, but she said there were no more flights left to Vancouver either. So I asked her if we could get on a flight to Calgary and she said, ‘Where’s Calgary?’

They finally got to Calgary, though the flight was delayed two hours due to a missing flight attendant.

“We were zero-for-seven for on-time flights,” said Shena. Ironically, the only seats left for Nathan and Shena on their flight from Calgary to Vancouver were first-class.

Five and a half days of watching their flights get canceled and four different airlines later, the Couperuses made it home.

“The thing we appreciated the most was Dordt hospitality,” said Shena. The most annoying thing? “The other people in the airports.”

Looking back on the whole experience, Shena points out, “We were just happy to get home before Christmas.”

Van Soelen resigns from coaching position

Ashlee Stallinga
Staff Writer

As the seniors on his team finish their last season of Dordt College basketball and prepare to move on with their lives, Coach Greg Van Soelen will do the same.

Van Soelen announced earlier this year that it would be his last year with the team; after this season, he will step down as the men’s basketball coach.

“At the beginning of the year, I got the feeling that the administration was looking for directors of leadership in men’s basketball,” Van Soelen explained. “I felt that I’m not the guy that they were looking for,” Van Soelen said. “They were willing to work with me, but I feel like it might be time to step down.”

Provost Erik Hoekstra stated that in every program, both curricular and co-curricular, Dordt wants “to push for a vibrant program that is aligned with the educational task and framework of Dordt College… and brings it to life.”

He names that as the challenge that is offered to each and every leader, and one that Van Soelen has risen to meet for many years.

“I respect tremendously that when faced with that challenge, Greg Van Soelen has done… a great job of bringing the program to where it is now.”

Even with Van Soelen’s resignation announced, Hoekstra notes that he persists in working towards the challenge.

“Having resigned, Greg continues to lead with integrity and excellence,” Hoekstra said. “I feel like I’m a senior,” Van Soelen said. “You always want your best year, best performance then. I’ll do the best job I can—that’s been the goal from the start of the year.”

As a player, Van Soelen certainly had a good senior year. That year, in the 1987-1988 season, his team accumulated—along with many other records—the most points in a single season in program history: 2783. Van Soelen scored 900 of those points. In fact, during his time here as a player, Van Soelen claimed many all-American as a sophomore, junior, and senior. The stats he accumulated during his four years here are impressive: most points (3104), best field goal percentage (.631), most free throws made (712), most rebounds (1123), and the most games started (109), among others.

“Tough loss for Van Soelen’s replacement,” Greg Van Soelen will step down as the men’s basketball coach. Photo by Kelly Cooke

As a coach, he took his team to Nationals in the 2005-2006 season, and he currently holds a coaching career record of 226-165. He stands second in the record books with most years coached and most wins in program history.

But if you ask Van Soelen, he’ll say it’s not the titles, awards and records that create his most memorable moments in Dordt College basketball.

“There are always the memories of great wins and tough losses,” he said. “But those are not the first things that come to mind.

“In basketball, you form friendships as a player which are memorable. Now, as a coach, when former players come back and we still have a common bond—those are special moments.”

Those moments Van Soelen will miss most.

“I’ve spent 20 years here—16 as an employee, and four as a student,” he said. “I’ve enjoyed the opportunity to work with Christian young men and fellow coaches. I’ll definitely miss that.”

Looking ahead, Van Soelen isn’t entirely sure what next year will bring. “I don’t anticipate staying in admissions,” he said. But no plans have been set yet. “I’ll see where it goes from here.”

As for the men’s basketball team, the administration has been looking for Van Soelen’s replacement. “In the next few weeks, there will be final interviews,” Hoekstra said.

A new coach will most likely be announced some time in February.

Dordt Sport Report: Kate Du Mez

Ashlee Stallinga
Staff Writer

You are an engineering major… how do you balance schoolwork and sports?
It’s pretty easy because I jumped into sports and homework right away. Sports help me structure my time; in the spring, I don’t know what to do with myself.

Where do you see yourself in regards to sports in the future?
I can see myself coaching… maybe at the high school level. I don’t think I can just walk away from sports after college.

Do you have any pre-game traditions?
I listen to music on the way to games.

Are there any must-haves on your pre-game playlist?
Oh, I just made a playlist! Let’s see… I like “Let it Rock.”

What’s your favorite professional sports team?
The Packers.

Have a favorite player?
Well… Brett Favre. Even though he’s no longer with the Packers.

Who or what inspires you?
Almost all Vince Lombardi quotes.

What’s your favorite movie?
It’s usually just the last one I’ve seen. I really liked “House Bunny.”

How do you feel about mini-marshmallows?
Oh! I just had some after dinner. I love them.

Kate Du Mez plays both soccer and basketball for Dordt. Photo by Ashlee Stallinga

Kate Du Mez plays both soccer and basketball for Dordt. Photo by Ashlee Stallinga

Van Soelen will miss most.

“Tough loss for Van Soelen’s replacement,” Greg Van Soelen will step down as the men’s basketball coach. Photo by Kelly Cooke
January 29, 2009

Ashlee Stallinga
Staff Writer

While the rest of us shiver in the cold and patiently wait for spring, one group of guys never gets sick of the ice: they call themselves the Blades.

The Blades—Dordt’s hockey team—willingly spends four days on the ice in practice every week, and plays two games each weekend. Their hard work, plus team chemistry and experience, pays off. The team is currently holding a 17-4-1-1 record, and is undefeated in its conference.

“We work hard,” said coach Nate Van Niejenhuis. “We have a lot of experience and leadership—nine upperclassmen, including eight seniors. And often, the relationship between the players goes beyond hockey. They do everything together; they’re friends.”

When on the ice, these friends have one goal in mind: to repeat last year’s trip to Nationals. Unlike any other team at Dordt, Nationals for the hockey players has nothing to do with the NAIA. The NAIA removed hockey from its programs in the 1980’s; instead, the Blades are part of the ACHA: the American Collegiate Hockey Association, which—when compared to the NCAA—is an NAIA equivalent. To get to Nationals in the ACHA, teams must either be ranked first or second in their division, for a guaranteed spot, or they must take first or second in the Regional tournament, one of which will be held at the All Seasons Center on February 13 and 14.

Last year, the Blades were ranked fourth, and succeeded in proving themselves at the Regional tournament. This year, they may not have to: after the most recent ranking, Dordt was sitting in spot number two. The team’s recent success has been generating some more interest in Dordt hockey.

No matter what the reason, the Blades have been on the ice since 1968—at first, against Dordt’s better judgment. “The school wouldn’t have anything to do with those rowdy Canadians,” said Van Niejenhuis. “Well, maybe that isn’t fair. But when it started, the team was all Canadians, and it was called the ‘Sioux Center Blades.’” Thus, “tradition is steeped in the name,” according to Van Niejenhuis. Even though the team is now officially a part of the Dordt College athletic department and has students representing Colorado, Minnesota, and Iowa as well as Canada, it still retains the name, “the Blades.”

The Blades are heading into the last few weeks of its season, continuing to work hard for that spot in Nationals.
Dancing cops perform at American College Theater Festival

Grace Venuhiets
Staff Writer

The cops from Dordt’s fall show “Urinetown,” danced their way down to Lawrence, Kan. this past week to perform their selected “Cop Song” before an audience of 89 schools from five states. Only eight scenes (chosen by an American College Theatre Festival selection committee) were selected to perform at the festival from the entire collection of student and faculty directed shows performed at all participating schools. Dordt participant and “Officer Lockstock” from the “Urinetown” cast, Mark Bylenga, says that “the Cop Song” is a unique scene because of its distinctive choreography. “There are not many sword-fighting, singing cops out there,” said Bylenga.

The purpose of the weeklong festival is to “celebrate and bring honor to different production cues that have been submitted throughout the year,” said Bylenga. In addition to the eight selected scenes, six full length productions were invited to perform as well. Northwestern’s “Terror Texts” – a show based on various Bible stories – was one of the six chosen. Besides the performance of shows and selected scenes, ACTF offers students opportunities to display the talents in directing and acting in 10-minute shows and internship workshops. Workshops offer learning experiences “for every stinkin’ part of theatre you can think of,” said Bylenga. Nearly 50 students from Dordt’s campus attended ACTF this year to take part in the learning and performing experiences offered.

In addition to the learning opportunities, ACTF holds a scholarship contest called the Irene Ryan Competition - named after the actor that played “Granny” on the TV show “Beverly Hillbillies.” Ten actors from Dordt were nominated, with their chosen partners, to participate in this special competition. The actors take part in three rounds of rehearsed acting that displays their abilities to a panel of judges. The judges pick a certain number of pairs to move into the next round, until only two pairs remain to claim the Irene Ryan Scholarship. The number of Dordt actors and Irene Ryan nominees “shows enthusiasm for theatre on this campus,” says theatre professor Teresa Ter Haar. Most of the students at ACTF are there for a chance to develop themselves for their future careers. But within Dordt’s group of students, only three are declared theatre majors. “Our students are interested in broadening their idea of what theatre is,” said Ter Haar. “We’re a smaller college, and it’s harder for us to prepare [for this kind of festival], so it speaks to the students that are willing to challenge themselves in theatre.”